

providing a shaft, a retractable sheath, a self-expanding tubular stent, said shaft, stent, and sheath cooperatively sized so as to allow axially receiving said stent between said shaft and said sheath, said shaft having a distal region with outwardly directed projections and a distal end, said sheath having a distal region and a distal end, said stent having a distal end;

providing a shrinkable film material having a tubular shape with a proximal waist;

providing a distally decreasing tapered tip having a lumen therethrough and a proximal end;

32 affixing a portion of said shrinkable film material to said shaft at a position in said shaft distal region proximal of said distal end by snagging said waist on said shaft projections such that there exists a free portion of said film distal of said affixed position;

positioning said sheath co-axially over said shaft such that said sheath distal end is positioned near said affixed film position;

positioning said compressed stent proximally and co-axially over said shaft such that said stent distal end is disposed near said affixed film position and said stent is radially constrained by said sheath distal region;

disposing said tip co-axially over said shaft such that said tip proximal end is positioned near said affixed film position;

draping at least some of said film free portion over said distal tip; and

shrinking said film free portion over said tip such that said tip is secured in place over said shaft by said shrunken film.

48. A loaded, self-expanding stent delivery catheter assembly comprising:

a shaft having a distal end and a distal region with outwardly disposed projections;

a retractable sheath having a distal region and a distal end disposed co-axially over said shaft distal region such that said sheath distal end is positioned proximally of said shaft distal end;

B<sup>2</sup> a self-expanding tubular stent co-axially disposed over said shaft distal region and disposed co-axially within said sheath distal region, such that said stent is radially constrained by said sheath distal region; and

a tapered tip co-axially disposed over said shaft distal region substantially distally of said sheath distal region, said tip secured at least in part to said shaft by a generally tubular film having a proximal waist with said proximal waist secured to said shaft distal region by said outwardly disposed projections.

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